

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bishop's Stortford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117085

Headteacher: Mrs D J Glasgow

Lead inspector: Mr M J Weaver

Dates of inspection: 2-5 February 2004

Inspection number: 257053

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	416
School address:	Cricketfield Lane Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire
Postcode:	CM23 2RL
Telephone number:	01279 652376
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Malcolm Hooker

Date of previous inspection: June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in an advantaged residential suburb close to the centre of Bishop's Stortford. The school has 416 boys and girls on roll, including 43 children attending the Nursery part time. The majority are of white British heritage with 12 pupils from seven other ethnic groups. None of these pupils are at an early stage of speaking or using the English language and all speak and use English fluently. The attainment of pupils on entry to school is above the national average. Thirty-two pupils have special educational needs, which proportionally is below average. The majority of pupils with significant special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties; a few are on the autism spectrum. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs that encompass these difficulties, and this is broadly average. The number of pupils joining the school after the normal starting age and leaving before the end of Year 6 is very low. The school is involved in the National College for School Leadership. It has close links with the local high school for teaching mathematics at Year 6, an Anglo-European college for teaching French in Years 3 to 6 and a Music Foundation for individual tuition.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9352	Mr M J Weaver	Lead inspector	
19320	Mrs B Attaway	Lay inspector	
22147	Mrs A Holland	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage English Art and design
29426	Mr D Grimwood	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs Science Design and technology Music Religious education
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school that is committed to enabling its pupils to achieve high standards in an environment that fosters fun in learning. Pupils achieve well above average standards overall in English and mathematics and above average standards in science by the time they leave school at Year 6. The quality of teaching is good and the school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management are good overall with a clear and effective educational direction given for the school's further development.
- Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Teaching is good with a high proportion of very good teaching; this enables pupils to attain high standards.
- Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology, but more needs to be done to use information and communication technology in classrooms.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their attitudes are good.
- Assessment systems are very good and are used well to promote high standards.
- The school enables pupils with physical disabilities to access all parts of the school.

The school has made **good improvement** since the last inspection in many areas because of the headteacher's clear focus on sustaining high standards and the action taken to address weaknesses in subjects as they arise. Leadership and management by the headteacher are very good and she is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher. The headteacher and staff have successfully managed the substantial increase in numbers on roll since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are good and fully reflect the findings of the last inspection although teaching has improved, with more lessons being of very good and excellent quality. The school has maintained the good standards in the Foundation Stage with significant improvement for its outdoor provision; at Year 6, good standards continue to be attained in science, art and design, geography, and religious education. High standards continue to be attained in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Standards have risen in Years 3 to 6 in music and physical education, although standards in history are above average rather than well above average. The use of information and communication technology in classes is underdeveloped. The key issues have each been addressed satisfactorily.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	C	B	D
Science	A	A	B	C

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Achievement is good. Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage enables the children to achieve well. Children enter the Reception with above average skills in all areas of learning except for their mathematical development, which is well above the national expectation; all children reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception and many children exceed them. This is above the national expectation. Standards at the end of Year 2 are generally high and pupils achieve well. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good; they currently reach standards that are well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science at Year 6. This represents very good improvement in mathematics following the school's strong drive to raise standards because of the low results attained by pupils in 2003, with particular improvement in their investigation and problem solving skills. Although standards in information and communication technology are well above average, pupils' use of computers in classrooms in supporting other subjects is underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and achieve at the same rate as their classmates. Standards in religious education are above average at Year 6 and fulfil the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour are good. Relationships with peers and with adults are very good. Attendance is well above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching throughout the school is also **good** with a high proportion of very good teaching also observed. The quality of pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs, is **good**. The curriculum, including the provision for sport, the arts and other after-school activities, is very good. Provision for pupils' academic guidance is **very good**. The school deservedly has a high reputation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership and management given by the headteacher are both **very good**. She provides a clear and very effective direction to the further development of the school. She has ensured that subject weaknesses have been addressed, that the school competently undertakes accurate whole-school evaluation, and has ensured higher standards in teaching. She has delegated well to staff, several of whom have only recently taken on new areas of responsibility. The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher effectively. Leadership and management of key staff are both good. **Governors are very effective** in fulfilling their roles.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are satisfied with the overall provision made by the school. They are particularly pleased with the good standards of education and the care given to their children, although a high proportion of parents would value more information on their children's progress and homework and generally better communication. The inspection team does not agree with parents' perception that they are not sufficiently informed about their children's learning but agrees that the school should ensure parents' feel that they are fully informed. Pupils value the

school and say that teachers make learning fun. Pupils particularly enjoy music and information and communication technology.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Although there are no major concerns, the school should improve:

- The use of information and communication technology in classrooms to raise the opportunities for pupils' independent research.
- The quality of communication with parents.
- The way pupils' learning is recorded when monitoring lessons.
- The recording and monitoring of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good overall. Pupils attain standards that are well above average overall in English and mathematics and above average in science by the time they leave school at Year 6. Standards in the Foundation Stage are above the national expectation at the end of the reception year and children achieve well. Insufficient evidence was available to comment on standards in design and technology at Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 6, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
- Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Standards in information and communication technology and music are well above average in Year 6 and above average in Year 2.
- Standards in art and design, geography, history and religious education are above average in Year 6.
- Standards in art and design are above average in Year 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (29.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.8 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.9 (29.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2003 were well above the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The progress made in mathematics over the previous year when pupils attained average standards, reflects the strong focus the school has placed on raising standards. Although standards in science were lower in 2003 than the previous year, pupils still attained above average standards compared to all other schools.
2. When compared to similar schools, standards were well above average in English, average in science and below average in mathematics. When compared to their attainment at the end of Year 2, educational value added was very good in English, not as good as similar schools in mathematics and about the same as them in science.

¹ **Average Points Scores.** The average points score table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each subject tested.

Although pupils' attainment was below the school's targets in English and mathematics at the nationally expected level, the proportion of pupils exceeding the higher Level 5 targets was well above average in English and above average in mathematics. The highest attaining pupils achieve well because of the challenging work that is set for them.

3. Inspection findings show that pupils achieve standards that are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science at Year 6. The work done to drive up standards in mathematics has been effective, leading to a major improvement in pupils' achievement, particularly in their investigation and problem-solving skills. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers as no pupil is at an early stage in using the English language. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well in their learning throughout the school.
4. In other subjects, standards are well above average in information and communication technology and music, and above average in art and design, geography and history. Standards in religious education are also above average and fulfil the locally agreed syllabus at Year 6. Standards in physical education are only average in dance; no gymnastics lessons were observed.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.0 (18.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.3 (16.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.2 (17.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The results of the 2003 national tests and tasks at the end of Year 2 show that pupils attained standards that were well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. This indicates improvement at a faster rate overall than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was broadly average in reading and writing but well below average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the pupils attained standards that were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics.
6. Inspection findings show that pupils in Year 2 are now attaining above average standards in reading and writing and mathematics. They are also achieving above average standards in information and communication technology, art and design, and music. This demonstrates good improvement since the time they entered Year 1. Standards in design and technology, geography, history and physical education are average. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards in religious education at Year 2.
7. The well-focused literacy strategy has been implemented very effectively and pupils speak at length when opportunities are provided for them, many articulately. Numeracy is used well in supporting other subjects, particularly in driving up standards. This is because of a sharper focus on improving pupils' numeracy in the programmes of work used in lessons and in the leadership of mathematics. Pupils' competency is now good throughout the school.

8. Pupils develop their skills in information and communication technology well in Years 1 and 2 and very well in Years 3 to 6 when using equipment in the computer room. All other subjects benefit well from the cross-curricular use of information and communication technology, although pupils have insufficient opportunities to reinforce these skills either in classes, in groups, or independently.
9. Inspection findings show that children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. By the time that they enter Year 1, most children have reached the nationally agreed early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Many children are likely to have exceeded these standards and are expected to be working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The children's progress over time is good and children are achieving well because the quality of teaching they receive is very good. The curriculum is well planned, with a wide range of interesting and relevant activities that are well matched to their needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance levels are very good. Pupils work hard and are very conscientious. They show mature attitudes to issues that affect them. Their cultural knowledge is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Pupils readily volunteer for responsibilities and carry out their roles with enjoyment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.
- The level of attendance is well above the national average, but the monitoring of absences is not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good throughout the school and reflect the findings of the last inspection. Pupils know the class and school rules well and strive to keep to them. In a significant number of classes throughout the school, children and pupils approached their tasks in an enthusiastic and purposeful manner. Teachers have developed very good relationships with pupils and encourage them to do their best, to which they respond well, showing an enjoyment for the work they are doing. Teachers' behaviour management is fair, sensitive and effective when behavioural problems occur; pupils mention that they appreciate the way that they are treated. Some parents expressed concern over bullying, but no instances were observed and conversations with pupils indicated bullying is uncommon. School records show that reported incidents are dealt with effectively. Year 6 pupils '*bullying books*' show maturity, a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and strategies for dealing with it. There has been only a single exclusion in the current year. Exclusion is a rare event for the school.
11. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Older junior pupils enjoy many opportunities to take on responsibilities, including fulfilling the role as buddies to younger pupils enthusiastically. Many pupils from Years 2 to 6 take a responsible and mature attitude in their role as school council members. They run the council responsibly and ensure their classmates are aware of what is discussed and the decisions made. This gives pupils a voice in the school and encourages their citizenship development well.

12. The development of pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is good. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. The school's good social and moral education has a positive effect on the very good relationships within the school. The pupils' *'circle of friends'* effectively supports those who find relationships difficult, and develops greater understanding of the needs of others. The discussion of ethical issues in some lessons, such as the development of Stansted airport, heightens pupils' awareness of how other people's decisions can impact upon their own lives. They enjoy supporting charities such as Blue Peter and older pupils operating the school shop have developed business skills, and their purchase of items with the profits, such as the draughts set, engenders a feeling of ownership.
13. Pupils' spiritual development is very effectively promoted through assemblies, displays, poetry writing in English, and in religious education lessons where pupils are given the opportunity to learn about the faiths and practices of the major world religions and are required to consider how what they learn will influence their daily lives. Pupils' spiritual awareness is enhanced for those who take part in music concerts at The Royal Albert Hall and The Barbican. Links with the local church are good and visits to Sikh and Buddhist Temples broaden their experiences of other faiths. The visit to 'Aklowa', a representation of an African village, gave pupils a genuine flavour of African culture and discussion on Mary Seacole highlighted heroines from a range of cultures. Pupils' self-esteem is raised by the opportunity for Year 6 pupils to practise their French speaking skills on visits to France.
14. The very good attendance and punctuality indicate the pupils' good attitudes to lessons and the quality of effective parental support. The current procedures for accounting for absences, although not sufficiently strong, should be enhanced by the school's plans to introduce an improved monitoring system. Pupils' attendance and enjoyment of the wide range of extra- curricular activities is also very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	3.3
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.1
National data:	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White - British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
404	1	0

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good overall**. The quality of the teaching is good overall, although much high quality teaching was seen during the inspection. Assessment

of pupils' work is thorough and is used well to promote further learning. The school provides a very good curriculum, which is enriched by a very wide variety of activities outside school hours.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall and has strengths in many subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons effectively.
- The level of expectation and challenge in lessons is good.
- The quality of assessment information gained is very good and is used very well to develop pupils' learning.
- The use of time, resources and support staff is good overall.
- High standards of behaviour are expected and teachers' encouragement for pupils and self-discipline is very good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	16 (29%)	26 (47%)	11 (20%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

Commentary

15. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, with a high percentage of lessons being of high quality, with teaching in the lessons seen being very good overall. Teaching over time is good. This quality of teaching shows itself well in the good knowledge that teachers have of the subjects and the effective planning they produce. Pupils are challenged appropriately, they enjoy the work they are given and achieve well as a result, building effectively on their earlier learning throughout the school. The work set for lower attaining pupils is good and they are supported well by competent classroom assistants in a number of subjects, but particularly in English and mathematics. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. This good provision ensures that most children attain the early learning goals before they enter Year 1, with many exceeding them. Year 1 teachers build well on this good start to the pupils' ongoing education.
16. The quality of assessment information gained from pupils' learning is thorough and provides good guidance for ensuring each pupil's learning is developed effectively. This includes teachers' evaluations of their lessons, which clearly also identify occasions when work needs to be revisited to ensure pupils' understanding is secure.
17. Because lessons are well planned, teachers use the time they have to the full with the greater majority of pupils maintaining their interest through the activities provided. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work and speak highly about their opportunities for learning to play musical instruments and to develop their information and communication technology skills, as the result of the good and excellent teaching. Teachers use open-ended and often challenging questions that probe and provoke pupils' thoughts. The highest attaining pupils are well supported and receive challenging work across the curriculum. Pupils respond well to the teachers' enthusiasm; high expectations for good behaviour and learning are not only developed effectively but pupils also enjoy the lessons.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, whether in small groups, when they are withdrawn individually, or in the classroom, is good. When pupils are withdrawn the support they receive is focused precisely on the learning needs of the individual pupil. Sessions are concentrated and are of an appropriate length to ensure pupils' concentration and learning. In class, well informed teaching assistants support pupils effectively and activities planned by teachers are well matched to the activities and needs of individual pupils.

EXAMPLE OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

This was an information and communication technology lesson for 26 Year 6 pupils held in the information and communication technology room, taken by the coordinator, who is an advanced skills teacher, illustrating how pupils' use of spreadsheets can help with mathematical investigations.

The lesson got off to a powerful start with a PowerPoint presentation to consolidate earlier work and to set the stage for new learning. Particularly well-focused vocabulary reinforced the technical terminology that added to pupils' increasingly developing technical language. Particular interest was injected in relation to a real life 'Hens in a pen' problem to determine the fencing required by the farmer. The excellent subject expertise of the teacher, delivered in dynamic and enthusiastic style, motivated the pupils keenly to attack the problem. The lesson moved at a brisk pace, with pupils very effectively using formulae to picture and plan for perimeter and area. Assessment of pupils' work throughout the lesson and the good feedback enhanced pupils' problem solving, stimulating and developing their use of computerised techniques to meet everyday needs. Well-considered references given by the teacher to identify how the oil industry uses computers to plan and solve issues,

extended pupils' awareness of real life situations and their respect for the power of computers was enhanced by seeing the impact of the use of spreadsheets in problem solving.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good overall. The school provides a balanced range of curricular opportunities in Years 1 to 6 that ensures that pupils make good progress in all subjects except physical education and design and technology where progress is satisfactory. Provision for music is particularly good. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum well. Resources and accommodation are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes is rich in opportunity to develop children's learning.
- Members of the support staff are well trained and very effective.
- Teachers' planning is secure and identifies valuable links between subjects.
- Music is a major strength of the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to achieve at the same rate as their classmates
- More could be done to use information and communication technology in lessons.

Commentary

19. The well planned curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage promotes their learning and personal development well. It is well organised with a very good range of practical activities. At certain times of the day, children have opportunities to choose their own areas of learning and are encouraged to become independent learners from when they first enter the Nursery. The outdoor area has been developed in a most imaginative way and is very well used by all three classes; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
20. The school provides a very good curriculum overall and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Arrangements for acts of collective worship are good. National guidelines have been adopted and adapted to meet the needs of the pupils in all subjects and are used very well to support teachers' planning. The literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented very well. The school achieves very high educational standards but continually strives to improve them. A good example of this is the focus on the very good cross-curricular use of English and good use of mathematics that is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Information and communication technology is used very well in the computer room to support other subjects. Music is a strength of the school of which pupils speak highly. A music specialist is employed and pupils have access to a wide range of musical experiences for singing in assemblies and choir, and in playing a wide range of instruments in the orchestra.
21. Very good equality of access and opportunity is provided for all pupils. In this mainly mono-cultural school, pupils are made aware of the diversity of cultures within society. Higher attaining pupils are challenged and their needs are met effectively. Lower attaining pupils are supported well by very effective and well-trained support staff. Pupils who were previously under-achieving in English at Year 2 are given good support through the additional literacy support of a well trained learning assistant when they reach Year 3.
22. Support for learning outside the school day is good, with a wide range of opportunities in which most pupils participate. The school has, for example, football, netball and cricket

teams, which compete against local schools. Peripatetic music teachers attend the school in addition to the music specialist employed by the school, with opportunities for pupils to learn the saxophone, flute, violin, piano, oboe, drums, guitars, clarinet and recorder. A large number of pupils take advantage of these opportunities, a pupil often plays piano in assemblies and the orchestra plays in a weekly musical assembly. This access to music at such an early age greatly enriches pupils' cultural experiences. Annual residential visits to the Isle of Wight for Year 6 pupils contribute well to their geographical and historical development and most other classes enjoy visits to places of interest that are linked to the curriculum, such as to St. Albans when studying the Romans. Many visitors contribute well to the curricular provision and the opportunity to join the French club and learn another language makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural experiences.

23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and ensures that they make good progress. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 often make very good progress towards achieving their targets in their individual education plans, which are thorough and contain clear and achievable targets for progress. These are communicated well to all relevant staff. Teachers and class assistants work together well to meet pupils' needs. The expertise of outside agencies is called upon when necessary. Throughout the school, work is well varied to meet individual needs.
24. Information and communication technology contributes very effectively to pupils' learning in other subjects when taught in the computer room. While this is a considerable strength of the education provided, insufficient use is made of computers in classes to build further on this good work to extend pupils' own research.
25. There is a good number of staff and support to meet the needs of the curriculum and the deployment of teaching assistants is generally very good. Accommodation is very good. There is good access to all parts of the school for pupils with physical disabilities. Displays around the school are good and enhance the learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, health and safety is very good as it was at the last inspection. Pupils are well known by staff and pupils' individual needs are identified. The involvement of pupils in school life, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care of pupils is very good.
- The school listens to pupils' suggestions and concerns.
- Induction procedures for new pupils in all years are very good.
- Individual target setting enables pupils to identify and review personal targets.

Commentary

26. The well being of every pupil is viewed as an important part of the school code. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and the school has made good use of a child protection trainer to ensure staff can readily identify concerns; arrangements are in place to ensure child protection is reported at governors' meetings. Networking with external agencies supports families in crisis and individual children. Qualified members of staff

provide first aid; some staff have received additional training and this raises the level of care. Pupils' learning about healthy eating has been reinforced through the type of snacks allowed at breaktimes. Health and safety arrangements are very good and risk assessments, including those for visits, are conducted thoroughly.

27. The well established school council is giving pupils in Years 2 to 6 the opportunity to express their opinions toward the development of the school. Representatives are elected by their classmates and those holding 'office' fulfil their role with enthusiasm and integrity. Pupils' views are sought through the school council and questionnaires; this is good practice. School council members talk about their work at the annual meeting of parents and governors and this allows them to have a voice in the school's future development. Pupils' independence is generally developed well throughout the school, although more opportunities are required for pupils to use computers in lessons to support their learning further.
28. The very good induction procedures for new pupils help them integrate very well. Pre-school home visits begin relationships in informal surroundings and this raises the confidence of young children. The school helps them settle in quickly and to feel happy and secure. Parents of the youngest pupils are impressed with the arrangements for nursery pupils and for reception class children when they transfer into Year 1. The school's assessment of pupils entering in later years aids their induction well. Close links with local secondary schools enable Year 6 pupils to transfer to secondary education smoothly.
29. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets throughout the school and this strengthens the learning partnership between pupils and teachers; Year 1 pupils are clear about their targets and share them with visitors freely. Assessment throughout the school is used very well to guide pupils in the next steps in their learning and to enable them to achieve appropriate to their abilities. The whole school reward system publicly celebrates kindness, effort and achievement and this encourages pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are good; most parents have a positive view of the school. At the last inspection the partnership was very good. Links with other schools are very good and extend pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive toward their children's learning.
- Parents are very well informed about school life, including the effective use of the school's website, and this contributes to the home-school partnership.
- Pupils' annual reports are very good.
- Links with the community, other schools and colleges are effective.

Commentary

30. Parents value information about their children's work and the progress made. Attendance at the three consultation evenings is very high, although fewer parents accept the invitation to meet their children's new teacher. The school is developing informal ways for sharing pupils' attainment, including parents being invited to assemblies where pupils'

achievements are celebrated. In response to the pre-inspection meeting and questionnaires, parents of younger children reported that the homework book is a good two-way communication tool and is effective. Some concerns were evident from those returning questionnaires, with 13 per cent indicating that they are not sufficiently informed of their children's progress. Analysis of questionnaires and discussions with parents highlighted four areas that concerned parents.

- They would prefer curriculum information each term instead of annually.
- Parents of junior pupils do not see homework after marking.
- They would value greater knowledge of teaching methodology to make help at home more effective.
- They would like the staff to be more accessible.

31. The school has responded positively to these concerns and has planned, for example, to issue curriculum information each term and to ensure that marked work is available for parents before it is retained in pupils' files. The school has not been negligent in seeking parents' views and had previously analysed returns from its own thorough questionnaire in 2003, which did not highlight any major issues.
32. Regular information is communicated to parents about social events and curriculum developments. Newsletters keep parents very well informed about school life and contribute well to developing an effective home-school partnership. The school is forward thinking in providing both current and prospective parents with a range of information on the school website, while hard copies are made available for parents without computer access. Pupils' annual reports give very clear information on pupils' progress over the year, which is supported by the consultation evenings. Pupils' progress is graded in every subject and grades are fully explained. Parental written responses to the reports indicate a high degree of satisfaction.
33. Effective links have been developed with a range of parents and others in the community. Parents, grandparents and members of the community volunteer to help in class and do so enthusiastically. They receive guidance and an introductory pack to aid them in their support. Parents and other adults make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. The parent association has raised very generous funds, and pupils have benefited from increased resources such as the playhouse for nursery pupils, library books and equipment for physical education. Links with other local schools are very good and contribute significantly to pupils' learning. The teaching of French is supported by a local college and higher attaining Year 6 pupils extend their knowledge as a result of the effective cross phase teaching of mathematics by a High School teacher. This enables the highest Year 6 attainers to receive teaching more suited to their needs. Effective links are held with the local schools' consortium which develops good curricular links with staff for sharing good practice and considering ways for moving pupils' learning forward yet further.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and is well supported by the effective deputy headteacher. Overall, this quality of leadership reflects the findings at the last inspection. The leadership and management by other key staff is good overall. The work of governors is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear vision and focus for the school's work and is not complacent in seeking to drive up standards.
- She has ensured that teaching has improved and that staff are being enabled to fulfil their roles, a number of which are new to them.
- She has implemented an effective school improvement plan.
- Members of staff have very good opportunities to develop their personal and professional skills.
- Governors are very closely involved in setting the strategic direction of the school, with the newest governors keen to fulfil their roles effectively.

Commentary

34. The headteacher provides very clear direction for the work of the school. She has ensured that standards are high and improvements made through effective planning when weaknesses appear, such as in the comparatively low attainment in mathematics in the national tests in 2003. As a result of the clear focus and commitment to ensuring high standards, the school identified a number of areas where weaknesses occurred and addressed them all very effectively. This has resulted in a more professional approach to preventing such weaknesses impacting adversely on pupils' learning with better strategies now securely in place, such as in the rigorous assessment techniques.
35. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection with more lessons now of very good and excellent quality. Weaknesses in provision identified at that time in dance, physical education and design and technology have been addressed and are now satisfactory. The headteacher has developed a strong and supportive team spirit amongst staff. Senior managers are effective in performance management and conduct good quality, well focused lesson observations as part of their monitoring. Other lesson monitoring, however, does not contain the same focus on pupils' learning. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The coordinator works well with teachers and parents to help to ensure the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. Coordinators with new responsibilities are aided well by the senior management team and are actively involved in monitoring pupils' work and planning to ensure the continuity and progression of work within each year group.
36. The school development and improvement plan is an effective document that steers the work of the school very well. Planned actions are monitored closely through regular review and modified or developed when considered beneficial to pupils' learning. A positive aspect of the planning is that it is held on computer and relayed to all staff on the school Intranet, the information being available to parents also. Members of staff have good opportunities to develop the professional skills needed to fulfil their roles effectively, and new members of staff receive an appropriate level of advice and support.
37. Governors are very involved in setting the strategic direction of the school and receive good information from the headteacher to keep them abreast of progress of the school's work and areas for attention. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Governors fulfil their roles very well and have good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses, and those new to their roles receive training and good support and guidance from their colleagues. Health and safety are taken very seriously as are educational aspects of the school's provision for pupils of all abilities. The requirements for race equality and

educational inclusion policies are fulfilled; the school is considering ways to communicate the results and impact of racial equality to parents

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	993,254	Balance from previous year	83,948
Total expenditure	983,827	Balance carried forward to the next	74,642
Expenditure per pupil	2,326		

The principles of best value, led by the headteacher, are carried out very well.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Provision in the nursery and reception classes is **good**. It provides children with a secure, stable start to their educational life. The school has sustained the standards reported at the last inspection and has significantly improved the outdoor facilities.
39. Teaching and learning are well planned in the nursery class and two reception classes and take effective account of the children's needs. Children's attainment on entry is above national expectations for children of this age. The majority of children have had the benefit of pre-school provision and most have attended the school nursery. All children achieve well because teaching is good and often very good. The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting and relevant activities that are well matched to the children's needs. Adults set excellent role models for the children and manage them well. All staff work very well together as a cohesive team. The accommodation is very good. The improved outdoor area is well used and has been adapted imaginatively to stimulate the children's learning. The classrooms and outdoor area have high quality appropriate resources. The coordinator is very effective and has a very clear vision for this stage of the children's learning; she involves all staff well in both short- and long-term planning.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to develop as independent learners.
- Supportive relationships are established, so children feel confident and happy.
- All children are likely to reach the expected goals by the end of the year and many will exceed them.

Commentary

40. In all three classes, children are given opportunities to manage their own timetable and choose which activity they wish to follow. This is carefully monitored by staff to ensure that children cover the full range of activities available to them. The children are already beginning to take responsibility for their own learning. They are learning the importance of taking turns and listening to each other. Teachers and support staff interact very well with the children, who are confident and happy. Teachers use good strategies to develop children's understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of their actions. All children, including those with particular needs, are making good progress, with many of them likely to exceed the early learning goal.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop children's language skills and teaching is very good.
- Assessment of the progress of different groups is well developed.

Commentary

41. Children enter the nursery and reception classes with above average levels of language development. Because teaching is very good in all three classes and very good support is given, children achieve well. Children listen well and respond positively to stories, songs and rhymes. In the nursery, children acted out *'The Tiger who came to tea'* while the teacher read it. They speak up clearly and enter into role-play confidently. They have well developed pre-reading skills and many children can already sound out simple words. They know and understand that print conveys meaning and where to start on the page. From the nursery onwards, most children can write their own names legibly. In all three classes, children enjoy using the emergent writing areas and produce their own 'books', which they will 'read' back to adults. Members of staff exploit every opportunity to extend children's language and literacy skills and support staff use questioning very effectively in group activities. Assessment is used very well to plan the next steps in the children's development in all three classes. Most children will exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning which ensures that children achieve well.

Commentary

42. Children enter the nursery with a good level of mathematical understanding. A variety of appropriate activities is planned to support and extend this knowledge. Mathematical language, such as 'more than' and 'less than' is introduced whenever possible. In the outdoor area, large snakes are painted on the ground with big numbers on; children are sent to line up on a particular number and they are asked to come into the classroom by that number. Children can articulate easily which number they are on and which number comes before and after it. In a very good lesson observed in one reception class where some children were particularly able, the teacher had provided challenging tasks and was encouraging them to use their mental ability to double numbers to good effect. In all three classes, number rhymes are used to support learning and activities are planned to sustain children's interest in the subject. All children are likely to reach the early learning goals in mathematics and many will exceed them.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

No sessions where knowledge and understanding of the world was the focus were observed in the reception classes. However, planning indicates that this area of learning is covered well. Provision in the nursery is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery members of staff use questioning very effectively to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Commentary

43. In a very good lesson in the nursery on how water changes when it is frozen and then melts, the support assistant used probing questioning which made the children think about the processes they were observing. Having coloured the water the day before and put it in the freezer, children were asked to suggest what would happen when the cubes melted. Most knew that when the cubes were placed in water, they would melt and some guessed that the water would take the colour of the cube. In the outdoor area, the children are learning to 'drive' on the correct side of the road and to observe 'stop' signs and pedestrian crossings. Reception class planning reveals that children have regular opportunities to cook with parents, that they learn simple mapping, and that they have opportunities to explore the environment. In all three classes, children use everyday technology; computer software is matched to the children's needs and promotes learning in other areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics. Children can control the mouse and click and drag pictures. All children are likely to reach the early learning goals in this area and many will exceed them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

44. Only one lesson was observed in each of the reception classes. In nursery and reception classes, children have good access to a range of equipment to develop their hand-to-eye coordination. They have regular access to the outdoor area that enables them to use a good variety of large wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. In all three classes, they handle and use this equipment confidently. In a good lesson, children were learning how to throw and catch in a controlled manner; most children were able to undress and dress themselves correctly. In a good dance lesson, children listened attentively and began to apply themselves to movement to match the sound they were hearing. Most children are likely to reach the early learning goals in this area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

45. No lessons were observed where creative development was the focus. However, children were observed briefly using vegetables to print and to make pasta pictures. They handle paints and glue confidently. Work on display and examination of teacher's planning indicates that children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills and their work indicates that they are likely to exceed the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1. No use of the role-play areas was observed during the inspection but children have many opportunities to use them and to develop their imaginative play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well planned and challenging curriculum enables pupils to make good and sustained progress.
- Teachers carefully analyse areas of potential weakness and constantly seek to drive up standards.
- English is used effectively across the curriculum.

Commentary

46. Standards at Year 6 have been consistently well above the national average over the last five years and inspection findings confirm this. Standards at Year 2 were well above the national average until 2003 when they fell slightly in reading and writing, although they remained in line with similar schools. Staff have carefully analysed the reasons for the fall in achievement at Year 2 and have taken steps to tackle the issues that emerged, which were the result of a year group with a higher than normal number of pupils with special educational needs. Actions taken as a result of this analysis led to pupils regularly receiving additional literacy support, as are some pupils with particular needs in Year 4. Overall, the achievement of pupils of all abilities is good and reflects the well planned and challenging curriculum. Many pupils in the current Year 3 and Year 6 are working at levels well above the expected level. Current standards in Year 2 are above average. Teaching is good overall, with some teaching that is very good. Teacher expectations in the subject are generally very high and lessons are planned with clear learning objectives.
47. Pupils enter the school with language skills that are above average. Speaking and listening skills are taught well. In all classes, pupils listen attentively and make good progress in expressing their ideas. By Year 6, pupils can talk confidently about their work and they can compare, for example, the medieval English of Chaucer's work with Shakespearean English and modern day mobile phone text language. Members of staff give pupils many opportunities to enrich their vocabulary. By the end of Year 6, most pupils will have reached a standard well above national expectation in speaking and listening.
48. Reading is taught well throughout the school and standards reflect this. A considerable number of parents support reading in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Pupils tackle new words with confidence and their comprehension skills are good. At Year 6, the standard of reading is very good. Pupils enjoy a wide range of texts and they often choose classics such as *'David Copperfield'* for their home reading. They can discuss and compare texts and explain why they like certain authors and dislike others. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in reading.
49. At Year 2, pupils are already writing for a variety of purposes. In Year 2, pupils were designing an information booklet for children in the reception classes. They knew that they had to make the booklet simple and attractive for this particular audience. By the time they reach Year 6, this skill has been further developed. Pupils punctuate their work accurately and spelling is increasingly accurate. Work is marked carefully and contains guidance for improvement. Pupils throughout the school are aware of their targets and refer to them often. Work across the school is moderated regularly and steps are taken to

make the subject both stimulating and challenging for pupils. The literacy strategy has been adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils, in particular to give increased opportunities for creative writing throughout the school. Year 6 pupils have written their own good accounts of a crime in the style of a melodrama. Year 5 pupils are writing their own narrative poems and they can clearly and confidently articulate what constitutes a narrative poem. Work is legible, very well presented, and pupils take pride in their written work.

50. French is taught for one half-hour each week to pupils in Years 3 to 6. It was not inspected as part of the statutory curriculum and no lessons were seen. Pupils, however, report that they enjoy learning a foreign language, and older pupils reinforce their language skills when visiting France on a day visit. The teaching of a foreign language is effective and contributes well to the wide curriculum that is provided.
51. Subject leadership is very effective. The coordinator has a clear understanding of the subject. Teaching is generally good and some very good teaching was seen, enabling the school to sustain the high standards reported at the last inspection. The curriculum is very well planned and assessment is thorough and used well to support pupils' future learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. They are taught to research topics by using reference books, by searching the Internet and by using CD ROMs. Many opportunities are given for them to write in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good** and meets the needs of all groups of pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained are high at Year 2 and very high at Year 6.
- Teaching is good and this is a significant factor in pupils' good achievement.
- Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work.

Commentary

53. Standards are above average at Year 2 and well above average at Year 6. This reflects the findings at the last inspection. In 2003 national tests, standards at Year 2 were average, but well below average when compared to similar schools. In the 2003 national tests at Year 6, standards were above the national average but were not as good as similar schools. Standards are now improving as a result of consistently good, and often very good, teaching. Achievement is good at Year 2 and very good at Year 6, where boys and girls attain equally well. Presentation of work is very good throughout the school.
54. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of basic numeracy skills. They use mental and written strategies to add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately and to add sums of

money. They investigate number patterns, including odd and even numbers. They have a good understanding of 'half' and 'quarter' and higher attainers work successfully with more complex fractions. They use tally charts and block graphs accurately to record data, such as their classmates' favourite colours and foods. Year 6 pupils have quick mental recall of number facts. They use written methods very effectively to solve real life mathematical problems on topics such as ratio, proportion and probability, and solve quite complex calculations involving positive and negative numbers. They have a very good understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils represent data very effectively by means of graphs, often involving information and communication technology.

55. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching that contributes well to some very good achievement. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' ability to make quick mental calculations and to solve mathematical problems. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their strategies and this helps them to see that there is often more than one way of solving a problem and also helps them to learn from their mistakes. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher emphasised the need to be methodical in whichever strategy was used, and this helped pupils in their use of calculators in problem solving. Teachers match work well to the pupils' varying needs and ensure that higher attainers are appropriately challenged. Teachers deploy learning support assistants well, such as in Year 5, where lower attainers were helped effectively to develop their understanding of reflective symmetry in regular polygons. Teachers prepare resources well and there is always plenty of practical apparatus to support learning. In Year 2, a teacher made very effective use of a bingo game that helped the pupils to consolidate their knowledge of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. The teacher used questioning well to enable pupils to observe closely and think carefully. The very best lessons move along briskly, but the pace of learning drops at times in lessons that are less effective. Ongoing assessment of the pupils' progress is very good. Teachers mark pupils' work positively, often offering guidance as to how the pupils might improve. Homework is given regularly to the older pupils to consolidate and develop their knowledge.
56. Leadership and management are good. The coordinator regularly checks the quality of planning and samples of pupils' work. She has not yet monitored teaching, as this is done by the senior management team. Procedures for assessing and tracking the pupils' progress are very good and the teachers make very good use of information gained from this and from an analysis of national test results to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. The pupils make very good use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. In history, for example, pupils in Year 6 use census information to calculate the average age of death in a locality. Science is used well to develop numeracy skills, such as when pupils use line graphs to depict their findings and measure angles. In geography, they record data relating to waste and recycling by means of computer generated tables and graphs. In a geography topic on South Africa, pupils in Year 3 draw accurate bar graphs comparing temperatures in Bishop's Stortford with those in Johannesburg.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are high standards at Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good emphasis is placed on practical and investigative work.
- Work in science offers good support across the curriculum, notably in literacy, mathematics and personal, social and health education.
- Leadership is good.

Commentary

58. Standards are above average at Years 2 and 6. Pupils generally achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. This reflects the findings at the last inspection. The good standards have been maintained by consistently good teaching, a major improvement being the greater emphasis on practical and investigative activities in lessons. Considerable attention is given to fundamental aspects of prediction and fair testing, giving pupils ample opportunities to develop skills and to question; they generally respond well.
59. Teaching is good overall, with some that is very good. Teachers plan work thoroughly, regularly providing activities for pupils' different abilities in classes. They provide clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils so that they are better placed to take some responsibility for their own learning. Teachers prepare well for lessons, so that resources are available and used well to provide effective demonstration. Good preparation and planning ensures lessons proceed at a brisk pace and time for learning is maximised, such as in Year 6, where pupils were given a visually dramatic demonstration of the effects of smoking, using a cigarette, clear plastic bottle and cotton wool to simulate the chest and lungs. Teachers influence the pace of learning by their good use of worksheets, using their own rather than relying on commercially produced ones, so that they more accurately influence the learning of their particular pupils. Worksheets are used effectively to promote pupils' thinking and to stimulate their scientific knowledge. Some pupils use computers to develop their word processing skills to record their results, others do so in graphical form. A few pupils are beginning to use the Internet for research. Teachers offer encouragement but also offer clear suggestions on how pupils might improve or extend their learning. They generally question well to challenge pupils' thinking. Science is used well to develop literacy and numeracy skills, such as when pupils write reports on investigations, use line graphs to depict their findings and measure angles.
60. Leadership and management are good. The coordinator has clearly identified areas for development and has influenced the present emphasis on an investigative approach. She has influenced the quality of teaching and learning by monitoring and offering advice on classroom practice and through the scrutiny of pupils' work. Good assessment arrangements include the analysis of pupils' responses to national test material so that areas of weakness in learning may be identified. Some timetabling arrangements are a little inflexible, such as Year 6 pupils having one, fairly long, lesson in science each week. This allows time for investigations to be completed in one session but not all lessons involve practical investigations and do not need such extended periods of time. Because there is only one lesson each week, this leaves a long time between sessions, particularly

if pupils miss a lesson for any reason and can mean that the consolidation of learning is made more difficult.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards throughout the school are high.
- Teaching is very good, and often excellent, and this helps the pupils to achieve very well.
- Information and communication technology is used widely in other subjects to enhance teaching and learning.
- Leadership is excellent and is a significant factor in the high standards attained.
- More use could be made of classroom computers.

Commentary

61. Standards are above average at Year 2, and well above average at Year 6. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. The achievement of all groups of pupils, including high attainers and those with special educational needs, is good and boys and girls attain equally well. Year 2 pupils are making good progress in developing their keyboard skills and their ability to use the mouse accurately. They accurately word process simple sentences about a snowy day, altering the style, size and colour of font. They use art programs with confidence and generate imaginative pictures and patterns. They devise instructions correctly to program a floor robot. Year 6 pupils use the Internet confidently to research information in a variety of subjects. They use hyperlinks very effectively and 'bookmark' their favourite websites. Pupils copy and paste pictures correctly into word documents and they move text around the screen confidently.
62. Teaching is very good and enables all groups of pupils to make very good progress. Some teaching is excellent, such as when PowerPoint is used in conjunction with spreadsheets to solve problems. Teachers plan their lessons very well and they manage pupils very effectively in the information and communication technology room, ensuring that all pupils are fully included. Learning support assistants play an important part in supporting individuals. The teachers' subject knowledge is very secure and this helps to motivate the pupils and to develop their confidence. Teachers make effective use of the electronic whiteboard to help the pupils save their work and good links were made with mathematics as the Year 2 pupils programmed a floor robot and consolidated their knowledge of right-angled turns. Teachers encourage pupils' independence in learning and monitor pupils' progress carefully. An excellent Year 6 lesson included a PowerPoint presentation, which helped the pupils to see how spreadsheets can help in mathematical investigations into topics such as area and perimeter. In a very effective plenary, the teacher referred to the application of spreadsheets in modern industry and this helped to make learning real for the pupils. One Year 5 teacher's expertise and enthusiasm motivated the pupils to make excellent progress in their understanding and use of databases. He made learning increasingly more difficult, as the pupils had to extend the number and depth of their 'field' searches.
63. Leadership is excellent and is a significant factor in the standards being attained. The coordinator has led training for colleagues that has developed their own expertise and

confidence. She checks the quality of planning and teaching throughout the school and provides colleagues with useful guidance. Although the new information and communication technology suite is an excellent feature of the school and is used regularly, the coordinator recognises the need to make greater use of classroom computers. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good and very effective use is made of the information gained in planning the next steps in learning. A weekly lunchtime computer club for pupils in Years 5 and 6 extends their expertise further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is very good in the computer room but insufficient use is made of computers in classrooms. Pupils use it widely in literacy, such as in very effective word processing of seashore poems and the front page of a newspaper. In art, pupils use copy and paste routines to design effective wrapping paper, and confidently flip and rotate images to make the patterns more interesting. Pupils make very effective use of a program to control the movement of models, such as fairground rides in design and technology and very good use of a sensors program to control movement according to the level of light. In history, pupils create very effective multi-media presentations on disease and death in Victorian times. They make very good use of spreadsheets in mathematics to create accurate graphs and to cost Christmas party items. A digital camera is used well to record three-dimensional work, and pupils make very good use of e-mail.

HUMANITIES

Religious education and history were inspected in full and are reported below. It was not possible to reach an overall judgement on provision in geography as it was not a focus of the inspection and no lessons were observed. No judgement was therefore made on the quality of teaching. Pupils' work was sampled to establish a judgement on standards. The written evidence available for geography indicates that coverage throughout the school is satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards continue to be high at Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors, particularly in connection with the local church, to support learning.
- The subject is led well.

Commentary

59. Standards at Year 6 are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This reflects the findings at the last inspection. Pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and their rate of achievement generally matches that of other pupils. This has been brought about by consistently good teaching. The good teaching encourages good attitudes amongst the pupils, who work with interest, produce

a good amount of well presented work and are keen to take part in discussions. Year 6 pupils discuss the importance of heroes, give considered responses and are able to make links between secular heroes and those of different faiths. Pupils' positive attitudes are also fostered by the school's lively approach to the subject, involving a good range of visits to places of interest, including Hindu temples, a synagogue and its active links with a Sikh Gurdwara. First hand experiences gained from these visits help to give the subject more relevance. Particularly good use is made of the local church through visits, where Year 2 pupils study the layout and significance of the various parts of the church, and where Year 6 pupils make a particular study of the stained glass windows. Visitors to the school from the church give pupils insights into Christianity and the working of a church.

60. Religious education studies are used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. Year 6 pupils, for example, develop their writing skills producing written accounts in various styles: a diary entry from the donkey carrying Mary to Jerusalem, an account of the Annunciation from Joseph's viewpoint. They support their art skills by producing very good illustrations of the Noble Eight Fold Path. The development of pupils' personal, social and health education skills is also covered as they consider how Buddhist principles apply to themselves.
61. Teaching is good. Teachers generally plan carefully. They have clear learning objectives, which they make a point of sharing with the pupils so that they are aware of, and take some responsibility for, their own learning. Good planning means that lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils' concentration and interest are maintained. Good class management techniques mean that teachers are able to let pupils discuss topics. Teachers are able to challenge pupils' ideas, helping to develop their speaking and listening skills and their understanding of the subject. Pupils' written work is marked well, offering encouragement and giving clear ideas on how pupils might improve their work. Teachers make effective use of the school's range of good quality resources. The divisions of the Seder Tray fascinate pupils in Year 5. Video recordings are used well, particularly by teachers of younger pupils, and although individual pupils use computers for research, their use as a support for religious education studies has not, as yet, been fully exploited.
62. Leadership is good. The enthusiastic coordinator has built up a good range of visits and resources. Pupils' work is monitored and a useful portfolio of work has been built up. Samples of pupils' work still need to be levelled against attainment criteria to give teachers clear ideas of the standards which they are striving to achieve. Assessment arrangements are good and enable effective tracking of individual pupils' progress.
63. Standards in **geography** are average at Year 2 and above average at Year 6. This reflects the findings at the last inspection. Achievement at Year 2 is satisfactory and good at Year 6. Year 2 pupils are beginning to understand the idea of a map or plan as being a view from above and are becoming familiar with maps of the locality and of the world. They locate some of the places visited by Barnaby Bear; they know the names of the countries which make up the United Kingdom and can locate them on a map. Pupils have conducted a traffic survey outside the school and observed features which are intended to make local roads safer. Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of aspects of the geography of the Isle of Wight, enhanced by a residential field trip to the island, and compare it with Bishop's Stortford. Pupils use literacy skills well to describe features of the island's geology and of its coastline. Pupils are aware of environmental pollution in the world and of the need for conservation of resources. They research the Internet for

information about recycling and they make effective use of computers to record the weekly waste produced in their homes by means of tables and graphs. Pupils have a good understanding of aspects of the geography of India, such as climate and transport, and use the Internet to compare the climates of Britain and South Africa.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good standards are sustained at Year 6.
- Teaching is generally good and this helps all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- Learning is enhanced by means of special 'history days' and visits to places of interest.

Commentary

64. Standards are average at Year 2 and above average at Year 6. All pupils, including high attainers and those with special educational needs, achieve well. Boys and girls attain equally well.
65. Year 2 pupils know about some important events in British history, such as the Great Fire of London and the Gunpowder Plot. They understand the idea of a timeline and of how things such as household items and transport have changed over time. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of aspects of life in Victorian Britain, such as the contrast between the rich and poor, education, and personalities such as Lord Shaftesbury and Charles Dickens. They make good use of their literacy skills, such as through persuasive writing and criticising the employment of young children in factories. Pupils have a good understanding of aspects of life in ancient Greece, and in Roman and Tudor times.
66. Teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well. There is a good balance between teaching and providing opportunities for pupils independently to research information from a variety of sources. Teachers make effective use of resources to enhance learning. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher gave the pupils the opportunity to use pen and ink, and pencil and slate to help them see some aspects of how classrooms have changed since Victorian times. Extracts from the old school's logbook helped pupils understand how methods of keeping discipline have changed drastically over the years. Teachers ensure that pupils use relevant vocabulary. For example, Year 6 pupils are taught to understand terms such as '*rote learning, copperplate, drill and insolence*'. Teachers emphasise the importance of using evidence to find clues about the past, such as Year 5 pupils learning about characters and gods in ancient Greece. Teachers enhance learning effectively by means of role-play and visits to places of interest. During a 'Roman Day', for example, Year 3 pupils had the opportunity to make mosaics, draw on tablets and eat a Roman banquet. This brought history alive for them. In Year 2, the teacher made effective use of a PowerPoint presentation to enhance learning about the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire.
67. The coordinator has only recently been appointed and her leadership is satisfactory. She has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and is currently developing commercial materials to improve the provision. The curriculum is satisfactory and resources used in school are of good quality and range. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music was inspected in full and is reported below. It was not possible to observe sufficient lessons in **art and design, design and technology** or gymnastics in **physical education**. Pupils' work was sampled in each of these subjects to support the judgements made for standards.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school enables pupils to achieve very high standards at Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Opportunities for instrumental tuition are very good.

Commentary

68. Standards are above average at Year 2 and well above average at Year 6. Achievement is generally very good. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in activities, benefit from the high quality of the teaching and achieve at the same rate as other pupils. The school has maintained the high standards found at the time of the last inspection. These have been maintained largely as a result of the very good teaching by teachers with considerable musical expertise. This quality has improved since the last inspection, in that there is a broadening of expertise.
69. A major influence on the standards is the number of pupils who have instrumental tuition. All pupils from Year 3 onwards have the opportunity to play the recorder, with the result that virtually all the pupils in junior classes can read music. A measure of pupils' positive attitudes is that about 70 per cent of Year 3 pupils attend recorder tuition, despite it taking place outside lesson time. Most of the pupils retain their interest through to Year 6. Tuition is also available in a range of instruments including drums, guitar, piano and various woodwind and brass instruments. Lessons are often oversubscribed. Pupils' enthusiasm is maintained and the status of music enhanced by pupils being given ample opportunities to perform for the school orchestra, various instrumental groups, in the weekly musical assemblies and at instrumental concerts. One pupil played the piano very well for the start and ending of two assemblies that contributed well to all pupils developing an appreciation of music. Approximately 60 per cent of Years 5 and 6 pupils form the school choir and they have had the opportunity to sing at a high level, sometimes in Latin, and in occasional performances at the Albert Hall. The quality of singing is generally very good. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of pitch and can recognise phrases in a song. Year 4 pupils sing confidently and melodically in rounds and Year 6 pupils sing rounds and canons in four parts. Music makes a strong contribution to the social and cultural development of the school and remains a significant strength of the school.
70. Teaching and learning are very good, because musical experts almost exclusively teach music. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and this results in lessons proceeding at a cracking pace. Pupils are totally engaged, concentrate fully, work hard and achieve very well. Progress in lessons is often continuous with the teacher singing instructions. The school has its own large, comfortable, well resourced music room, which means that teachers are able to arrange instruments and equipment for lessons and this helps to maintain the brisk pace and maximise the use of time. Lessons proceed without disturbing other classes, particularly important when Year 6 pupils beat out a Samba rhythm on a range of percussion instruments, including drums and agogo.
71. Leadership and management are both very good. The music coordinator teaches most classes for only two days a week at the school, with the result that some classes have

blocks of lessons rather than weekly. However, a full time member of staff, also with good musical experience, is teaching Year 4 classes, thus widening the scope of music tuition in the school. Assessment is cleverly woven into lessons, so, for example, the teacher sings to Year 2 pupils using various pitches and gets responses from individual pupils both through singing and by the playing of chime bars. The very good resources make substantial contribution to pupils' learning.

72. Three **art and design** lessons were observed, two in Year 2 and one in Year 6. Standards are above those expected at Years 2 and Year 6 and pupils make good progress in the subject. The teaching was good in two and satisfactory in the other. Observation of pupils' work on display indicates that the curriculum is well planned. Displays are of a good standard and many cover a range of subjects, such as a display on Saint Bridget's cross and another on the Victorians. Pupils learn to work in the style of famous artists such as Matisse and Cézanne, with Year 4 pupils having produced still life works on fruit, in the style of Cézanne, to a very high standard. There is clear evidence of progression in knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. Pupils are taught to use a variety of skills, techniques and materials. Leadership is satisfactory.
73. In **design and technology** only two lessons were observed, both in Year 4 classes. Pupils in Year 2 can design, make and evaluate vehicles using a variety of materials. Year 6 pupils design and make paper prototypes of slippers but, because design and technology is taught in short blocks of lessons, they do not have sufficient time to complete the project in one block. Records of work and photographic evidence show that previous Year 6 pupils have used construction materials to make computer-controlled models. Insufficient evidence was available to judge the quality of leadership, although one major improvement since the last inspection has been the introduction of a programme of work based on national guidelines. This is helping to ensure a consistent approach to the systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are not yet in place to establish pupils' progress or the effectiveness of the new scheme.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory** and ensures that the needs of all groups of pupils are met. It was not possible to observe any lessons in games or gymnastics as the chief focus was on the quality of dance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in dance at Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection.
- Very good subject leadership is a significant factor in this improvement.
- There is variability in the quality of teaching, but some is very good.

Commentary

74. Standards in dance are average at Years 2 and 6. This reflects the findings of the last inspection at Year 2, and is an improvement at Year 6. Evidence indicates that standards in swimming are average. The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in creating effective body shapes and movement in response to music. Higher attainers are making very good progress.

75. Overall, the teaching and learning of dance is satisfactory, with some very good teaching seen. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure and lessons begin with worthwhile warm-up sessions with pupils showing clear understanding of why this is necessary. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully, offering help and advice as necessary. Year 2 pupils were encouraged to make use of varying speeds and levels in their movements and this improved their performance significantly. All pupils are fully included in learning and where pupils are unable to participate in the lesson, the teachers provide opportunities for them to observe and evaluate the performance of others. In a Year 5 lesson for example, this helped the pupils to develop more ideas in exploring characters through gesture and expression. Year 2 pupils were encouraged to think carefully about their starting and finishing positions, and their transition from one mood to another, and this improved their interpretation of '*ying and yang*' music. The introduction of ribbons into the lesson enhanced performance.
76. Leadership is very good. The coordinator has developed a clear action plan, which is addressing the need identified at the last inspection to improve teachers' confidence in taking dance lessons. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of sports clubs, although the action plans seek to raise the overall profile of school sports. Football and netball teams compete against local schools with some success. All pupils at Year 6 are able to swim 25 metres unaided, with several exceeding this.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77. This aspect of the school's provision was sampled. Pupils value the teachers and all feel they have someone they can approach if they have a personal need. Circle time is effective in developing pupils' self-discipline and learning to listen closely to others' comments and feelings. The school council contributes well to the development of pupils' confidence and decision-making skills. Two representatives from each of the Years 2 to 6 classes are elected by their classmates to fulfil roles of responsibility as school council officers and complete their role well. Sex education, pupils' awareness of drug use and abuse and health and safety are firmly supported by their work in science. The support and guidance given to enable them to improve their next steps in learning is very good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).